



ST. CLARE OF ASSISI CATHOLIC CHURCH Mentorship Program Information

Over the years, I have realized that great role models are vital in helping teens grasp the deeper mission of the Catholic Faith. Teaching all the treasures of the Church is one thing; seeing individuals embrace these treasures is quite another. For this reason, role models in the Catholic Faith are essential. St. Clare's Mentorship Program connects what is taught to how it is lived by encouraging mentors to carry on the conversation with guided materials.

Historically, in the Catholic Church, mentors have fallen into the category of sponsors within the framework of one's journey towards receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation. The traditional purpose of a "sponsor" was someone who could mentor the individual as a role-model Catholic themselves. In the early Catholic Church, the process to become a Confirmed Catholic was called "Mystagogia" or "Guidance in the Mysteries." Although the length and approach to the process has changed through the centuries, the sponsor's role has remained a vital part in the **growth** of the candidate's spiritual journey towards receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation. The relationship is deemed to be life-long, continuing well after reception of the Sacrament.

Who can be a mentor? Mentors are individuals that must be at least 16 years of age, Confirmed in the Catholic Church, practicing their Faith, and cannot be one's mom or dad. We cannot suggest anyone to be someone's mentor; this is a task that you, as a parent, must decide on your own accord with your teen. Please consider having someone who is **trustworthy, in communication with you as a parent, and committed.**

What will the mentor be expected to do? The mentor will be asked to set up a 45-minute meeting once-a-month with the teen through the teen's parent(s). These can take place at a coffee shop, over lunch, on the phone or even FaceTime if need be. The mentor & parents will receive emails from St. Clare's, outlining the basics of *Thrive's Sunday Message* or *Fellowship's Wednesday Message*. Both will also receive a detailed guide for the monthly meetings, which follows a 4 Pillar Approach of discussing notions of Academics, Health, Spiritual, and Catholic Reading. If your son or daughter is in Year 2 of Confirmation Prep, then the mentor can be chosen to fulfill the role of sponsor for the Rite of Confirmation Mass.

We encourage mentors to email us with general updates, so we can give resources and guidance when they are faced with tough questions. Please prayerfully discern who might best fit this role for your son or daughter. It can bear much fruit in their life and especially in learning to trust in God's plan for them. If you have questions, feel free to email me.

Your Brother In Christ,

Chris Stevenson
Director of Youth Catechesis & Evangelization
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Guide to St. Clare Mentorship Program Year One

4 Pillars

ACADEMIC

HEALTH

SPIRITUAL

CATHOLIC READING

There are **4 Pillars of Topic** to being an Effective Mentor: *Academic, Health, Spiritual, and Catholic Reading*. It is expected that you are invested in these Pillars yourself, before you proceed to offer them as guiding points for the teen. You cannot give what you do not have or grasp. Each **45-minute meeting** will touch on some aspect of one or a combination of these Pillars. From experience, certain stepping stones need to be put in place before diving into talking about prayer. Noteworthy stepping stones are those of the Academic and Health Pillars. Below you will find a brief description of each Pillar and your role as mentor within each. Also, you will find a detailed monthly guide for your meetings; it is meant to serve you as a reference guide to conducting a fruitful and engaging encounter.

ACADEMIC

Teens often *worry* about the pressures of homework, maintaining great grades, and staying on top of the academic expectations that are given in High School. **When these worries are not met with encouragement, they consume the teen with fear of failure, depression, and unnecessary anxiety.** It is noteworthy to ask specific questions as to why they might have anxiety for a particular class or assignment. These inquiries offer the teen an opportunity to *express* where they might be needing encouragement or guidance in either getting into a study group or having confidence in meeting teachers after class for clarification. They may even need help in seeking a tutor if necessary. A worrisome teen will not be able to engage in the Spiritual Life. Furthermore, if the teen does not know what they want to do in life or feel confused about which college to strive towards applying to, this anxiety will consume them from within. Having a conversation about their interest and sharing your own journey will help them realize they must cut out their own path with courage and trust in God's plan for them. With that said, you are able to concretely find opportunities for them by inquiring about SAT/ACT study material and prep classes, National Honors Society requirements, involvement in social clubs and organizations, as well as, helping them understand the college admissions process. If you don't know the process, don't feel overwhelmed yourself. Your role is to be a positive guide who encourages, supports, and engages them to do their best with the best help that is available to them.

HEALTH

When teens have low self-esteem, they lack confidence in being the best version of themselves. **In fact, teens who hate something about themselves, cannot begin to love anything about God. As teens** sort through these anxieties, it is important to be a reassuring voice that God the Father has created a masterpiece with each of His creations. If the teen is too busy *trying to become* someone else or is infatuated with mirroring a celebrity or being consumed with a trend for fear of not fitting in, then they are unconsciously closing the doors upon God's guidance for who they were created to be. **In short, teens need to be reassured that God the Father works with what He creates.** Once the teen realizes this and incorporates prayer into their daily lives, they begin to understand how God the Father uses them as instruments to do a plethora of good in their very own community.

Teens need encouragement for good sleep habits, avoiding parties where drugs and alcohol are present, and making time for daily exercise in order to build their self-esteem. **Developing a set of good daily habits that assist in reducing the amount of stress that they incur is of utmost importance.** Many teens are involved in school-related sports teams, dance activities, or even a gym class. Others may not be. Encouraging a personal routine for exercise, whether it be a brisk walk or playing a sport with friends is imperative for teen's overall well-being. **Remember, we are body and soul.** Incorporating a walk into your meeting time is a great idea. St. Clare's offers an open-gym on Wednesdays from 6pm-7:30pm for High School teens; it is called Fellowship/Leadership. Encourage them to attend.

Other stress indicators such as dealing with gossip, bullying, and self-esteem issues are critical to address. You are not a licensed counselor, but your support in listening and conversing can go a long ways in helping them navigate through these issues and potentially lead them to seek professional help if it is needed. We have a great rapport with Student Support Counselors at several of the nearby high schools. Never hesitate to reassure these teens to seek out these professionals when they are struggling with school-related stress.

SPIRITUAL

The Slacker's Prayer, as I call it, is infamous among Catholics. It goes something like this: *Dear God, you are God and I am human. You take care of the problem set before me. Amen.* Unfortunately, **God wants instruments, not genie worshippers.** Historically, King David is said to have had 7 Gifts bestowed upon him from an early age; Fear of the Lord, Wisdom, Knowledge, Understanding, Counsel, Strength, and Piety. Put this in perspective: David was around 17 years old when he inherited the largest known Kingdom in his realm. Imagine the daily decision making and advice this teen, David, had to make on a regular basis. Nearly 1,000 years later, Jesus takes these Gifts and tells us that they are not just for a King, but for all who seek them through the Holy Spirit. Jesus promised us that God the Father would send the Holy Spirit to fill us with these Gifts. **Are we building a skill set to utilize these 7 Gifts?**

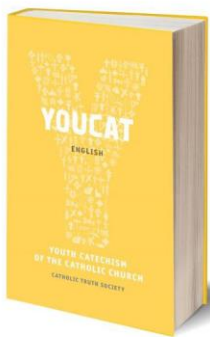
Picture a person coming to you and asking for advice. Let's say the person is depressed and perhaps even suicidal. Your first thought, upon the person asking you for advice, might be a plea to God the Father, saying why ME? And then, perhaps, it is followed by a silent Slacker's Prayer. The problem here is God did not instruct us to approach him as a genie every time something seemingly goes wrong. **We must be disciplined to learn a skill set that enables us to specifically ask for a combination of the Gifts given.** In the case of a suicidal teen asking for advice, I would ask the Holy Spirit for Wisdom and Counsel; Wisdom to know what questions to ask & Counsel to know where to lead him or her towards in terms of professional help. Each person might ask for different Gifts under different circumstances; yet, it is in knowing how and what to ask for that is most important. **We are called to collaborate with God.**

A well-balanced Personal Prayer Life incorporates many aspects of prayer and is ever-changing. A Personal Prayer Life *grows* forth from actively engaging in the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Sunday Mass. The goal is to allow God the Father to speak to us and in turn for us to listen and meditate on what He may be leading us towards. It is an adventure; a daily adventure. Often, many designate being a good Catholic as choosing a good work found in the Bible and doing likewise, whether that is visiting the sick, clothing the naked, feeding the poor etc. We must flip this ideology on its head in order to truly proclaim that we are imitators of Jesus. **For good works are results of prayer first and foremost. Jesus taught us to pray first and act second.** Honest prayer allows us to sort through what God the Father intends for us to be a part of. If we are praying sincerely, we will most likely find ourselves eventually doing one of these works mentioned in the Bible; **but it's imperative that we not choose, but allow God's guidance towards any one or a combination of such works.**

As a Catholic, the method to having a Prayer Life is centered upon a relationship with Jesus through the Holy Spirit in order to become who God the Father intended for us to be. The result of a Personal Prayer Life is *having confidence that one is doing the Will of the Father.* How do we go about this? **Your ultimate goal for the Spiritual Pillar is to help the teen develop a daily 15 minute routine dedicated to Personal Prayer.**

Discussing favorite ways to pray is a good start. **Seeking preferences is important.** Does the teen prefer a structured style like using traditionally memorized prayers like the Our Father, Hail Mary, or Glory Be or do they prefer being spontaneous and like to speak out to God as in a conversation with a friend? What are their favorite times of the day to pray; morning, afternoon, evening, or before bed? Let this be organic and follow up with them the challenges of being faithful and committed to this time each day. **Accountability is essential in order that this habit of daily prayer takes root. Be encouraging, often!**

CATHOLIC READING



The YouCat is a Youth Catechism designed to help deepen the teen's knowledge of their Catholic Faith. It is an easy read, but also offers great insight into why we do what we do as Catholics. Furthermore, the book helps us grasp the history, meaning, and purpose behind many of our most basic beliefs. **As a Mentor, you are expected to set the Chapter(s) to read for each meeting.** Taking time to soak in the chapters and have meaningful conversations about what had been read is priority. Don't overdo it. **This is not a sprint, but a marathon.** One Chapter a month is more than enough.

EMERGENCY

If anything arises from your conversation, which is of concern for teen's safety it is critical that you contact the right leads. **In the case of abuse, it is required by the State of Texas that you report it immediately. The reporting number is 1-800-252-5400. After reporting, contact Chris Stevenson.** If the teen demonstrates indicators that they may be suicidal, you need to immediately contact Chris Stevenson at 832-705-6238. It is required by the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston that the parents are contacted and the Pastor is made aware of the situation immediately. Remember, this is for the teen's best interest. The Houston Hotline for Suicide Prevention & Crisis Intervention is 1-713-529-TEEN.

January

Mentorship Program Year One

Prep Work:

- Set a time and location for the meeting.
- Be sure to have the teen bring their copy and yours' of the **YouCAT**. They received the books in November/December.

Opening Prayer

- Use this 103 year-old prayer commonly known as the St. Francis Prayer as an opening:
Note that St. Francis did not write the prayer, but it reflects aspects of his character.
 - "Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy.

O, Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love; For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; it is in dying that we are born again to eternal life. Amen."

Follow Up

- How was your Christmas Break? What was the highlight?
- Did your family attend Mass on Christmas? If so, where did you go?
- Did you have a chance to hang out with any friends? Tell me about that.

ACADEMIC SPIRITUAL

Refocus the Academic Pillar

***Emphasis on New School Semester**

Follow-Up on the Spiritual Pillar

***Emphasis on Crafting a Nightly Prayer Routine**

Questions:

- How many weeks until your next week off school? (If they are in the CCISD, March 11th-15th will be their Spring Break.)
- Can we make some academic goals for this stretch of time? What do you hope to accomplish in school between now and Spring Break? Can I pray for you during this time?
- What new classes are you looking forward to? Which ones are you least looking forward to?
- What does your Nightly Prayer Routine look like? Are you being faithful?
- Chris Stevenson talked about reflecting on your day from start to finish, from the moment you awake to the point you are in bed. Have you been able to do this frequently? Do you think replaying the day in your mind before sleeping will help you correct your mistakes?

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January Continued

- He also mentioned the need to become the best version of yourself by humbling looking for ways to improve your bad habits; have you identified some habits that are reoccurring? (Gossip, lying, laziness, etc. might be a few that someone might struggle with). Can you focus on just one of these this next month and try your best to not fall into this bad habit?
- After examining your day, do you see a need to ask God to assist you in **becoming the best version of yourself?** Why or why not? Would it hurt to ask God for assistance?
- What do you find most difficult about doing this prayer exercise each night?

Motivations:

- Encourage them and set goals for achieving a habit of doing the prayer exercise each night.
- Tell them that you believe in the importance of trusting God in all things, especially academics.
- Tell them you believe they are capable of doing great so long as they do their part and trust that God will do His.
- **Next month**, we will explore the components of a “conversation” with God.

CATHOLIC READING

Follow-Up on what was read from the YouCAT.

Questions:

- What stood out to you from what you read in the YouCAT?
- (If nothing had truly been read, take a moment to read something right then and there)
- What will you do differently in your Faith, now having this knowledge?
- What chapter shall we read for next month?

Motivations:

- Encourage them read and even re-read the short chapter picked.
- Be joyful about the opportunity to read up on the Catholic Faith.
- Remind them that this is not a school assignment, but something even more personal.
- Challenge them to find something unique to share about what they read for the next meeting.

Closing Prayer

- **Lead Closing Prayer and offer to God some of the topics discussed from the meeting.**
- **After closing with prayer, set the next meeting if possible.**

February

Mentorship Program Year One

Prep Work:

- Set a time and location for the meeting.
- Be sure to have the teen bring their copy and yours' of the **YouCAT**.

Opening Prayer

- Use this 103 year-old prayer commonly known as the St. Francis Prayer as an opening:
Note that St. Francis did not write the prayer, but it reflects aspects of his character.
 - “Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy.

O, Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love; For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; it is in dying that we are born again to eternal life. Amen.”

Follow Up

- Thank them for making time to meet with you.
- Ask them to name the best and worst thing of their past month. Talk about yours as well.
- Remind them that you have been praying for them. Ask them to pray for you.

HEALTH SPIRITUAL

Revisit the topic of the Health Pillar

***Emphasis on Exercise**

Follow with the Spiritual Pillar

***Emphasis on Crafting a Good Conversation with God**

Questions:

- Have you been able to incorporate exercise into your weekly schedule?
- Is it important to you to do some sort of physical activity each day?
- What stresses you out the most? School? Parents? Expectations?
- Have you ever considered going for a brisk walk for 5-10 minutes? Would this possibly help?
- When you pray at night, what does a conversation with God look like? Can you possibly *demonstrate* out loud what you might say to God here?
- This can be unusual, especially if you have never “spoken” to Him. Do you find it difficult to enter into this form of conversation to someone other than a physical person standing before you?
- Sometimes people confuse prayer with a mental exercise to oneself. Have you ever thought you were just talking to yourself? Why is that?



February Continued

- **There are many forms of communication**; even as a human species we have various forms. We choose to communicate via written words, spoken words, hand signs, and even abstractly through silent films and music. **Why then do we expect God to only use one form of communication with us?**
- If you send a text to a friend and they don't reply do you assume they didn't get the text?
- If you "like" something on social media, and the friend doesn't thank you for liking it, do you assume they didn't notice your "like"?
- Do you think that God's *ways* might be different than *human ways*? (Isaiah 55:8)
- Can you try to TRUST God more in that He actually does listen to you? Can you look for ways to be open to His Response coming in a different form than an immediate spoken reply?

Motivations:

- Encourage them to set aside time every day for some sort of exercise.
- Reassure them that *trusting that God "hears" you* is the first step to faithfully expressing yourself to Him.
- Remind them of the complexity of God and how creative His world is and how creative His responses might be.
- **Next month**, we will explore a set method to having a productive expressing

CATHOLIC READING

Follow-Up on what was read from the **YouCAT**.

Questions:

- What stood out to you from what you read?
- What will you do differently in your Faith, now having this knowledge?
- What chapter shall we read for next month?

Motivations:

- Encourage them read and even re-read the short chapter picked.
- Be joyful about the opportunity to read up on the Catholic Faith.
- Challenge them to find something unique to share about what they read for the next meeting.

Closing Prayer

- **Lead Closing Prayer** and offer to God some of the topics discussed from the meeting.
- **After closing with prayer**, set the next meeting if possible.

March Mentorship Program Year One

Prep Work:

- Set a **time and location** for the meeting.
- Be sure to have the teen bring their copy and you bring yours' of the **YouCat**.

Opening Prayer

- Repetition helps us appreciate new insights; once again use this 103 year-old prayer commonly known as the St. Francis Prayer as an opening:
 - "Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy.

O, Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love; For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; it is in dying that we are born again to eternal life. Amen."

Follow Up

- Ask them how their exercise is going.
- Ask them if they have been trusting that God "hears" them in their prayers.

SPIRITUAL

Revisiting the Spiritual Pillar

***Emphasis on the A.C.T.S. Method for Conversing with God**

***Emphasis on how to listen to God's Response in Prayer**

- Go over the A.C.T.S. Method for Conversing with God.
 - A – Adore God and **A**cknowledge that He is God, your God.
 - C – Tell God you are sorry and have **C**ontrition for things you are not proud about.
 - T – **T**hank God for anything and everything on your heart.
 - S – Ask God for **S**upplication or needs that you might have.
- Do you think **you can give God silence for 2-3 minutes, without interruption?**
- Winston Churchill said, "Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen."
- Silence can make you uncomfortable.
- Silence can often be taken in only one way: interrogative. It can become us waiting to explicitly "hear a vocal response" to our conversing. One can almost create an interrogation room atmosphere during your conversation with God. This is not healthy.

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March Continued

- God very well might respond later and perhaps not as you might imagine. He has many forms of communication that are at His disposal; be open to them.
- Treat silence with **an attitude of supporting God's way to communicate.**
- What makes prayer so engaging is that you actually have no idea how God will choose to respond; He has so many ways at His disposal that it requires our absolute attentiveness to catch His response in passing.
- *Listening* here carries a multitude of interpretations.
- Developing a skill set to recognize God's Response requires being **devoted.**
 - Devoted means "towards – being strong"
 - We must be committed 24/7 to seeing God at work.
 - This is what it means to always be ready!
 - If you tell me that God never responds, I will tell you that you never follow through faithfully on your part.
 - **The silence after placing your petitions is an act of reverence.**
 - **Don't necessarily sit for an hour expecting a vocal boom to erupt in the room.**
- Can you keep DEVOTED 24/7 to becoming interpreter of God's Communication to You?
- Starting this month, can you start practicing this?

Motivations:

- Tell them to set aside time each week to jot down a few ways God might be responding to their conversations.
- Remind them that you are doing it with them.
- Encourage them to be honest about making it a priority.

CATHOLIC READING

Questions:

- Are you glad that you read that chapter or do you wish that you chose a different one?
- Name one thing that you learned by reading the chapter in which you did not know previously.
- Was there anything that you did not understand completely?
- Would you like to pick the next chapter to read?

Motivations:

- Tell them *you are inspired* by their willingness to learn more about their Faith.
- Acknowledge their effort as heroic as they dedicate themselves more and more towards God.

Closing Prayer

- **Lead Closing Prayer and offer to God some of the topics discussed from the meeting.**
- **After closing with prayer, set the next meeting if possible.**

Additional Recommendations:

- Attending Mass together when possible
- Celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation by going to the Church together
- Write a letter, text, or email of encouragement

Great Online Resources:

- Newadvent.org (Historical Resources)
- ScriptureCatholic.com (Defending the Faith)
- BustedHalo.com (Great Articles)
- Catholicity.com (General Resources)
- Lifeteen.com (Youth-Oriented Articles)
- Catholicculture.org/news (Current Topics)
- Uscfb.org/bible/readings (Daily Scripture-Mass Readings)